

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **SAU 55 Timberlane Regional School District**

**Dr. Douglas McDonald, Superintendent  
Colleen Bovi, Director of Pupil Personnel Services**

### **Final Report April 19, 2001**

**Visit Conducted on:  
February 13 and 14, 2001**

#### **Team Members:**

Maryclare Heffernan, Chairperson  
Donna Ameen, Speech Pathologist  
Ben Augello, Principal  
Maria Barry, Special Educator  
Troy Carr, School Psychologist  
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Pat Dowey, Special Education Director  
Becky Forrestall, Special Education Coordinator  
Lou Goscinski, Special Education Director  
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# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

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Students With Disabilities  
  
(Commendations, Citations, and Suggestions for each school)

Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

# **New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report**

## **SAU 55**

### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU 55, Timberlane Regional School District comprised of the following schools: Atkinson Academy, Danville Elementary, Pollard School, Sandown Central, Timberlane Regional Middle School, Timberlane Regional High School. The visiting team met on February 13-14, 2001 in order to review the status of Special Education services provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, building principals, regular and special education teachers and related service personnel, and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via phone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of non-compliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

### **II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM APPROVAL VISIT: *Conducted on February 7, 8, 1995***

Based on a review of the previous program approval report, as well as a comprehensive look at district policies and procedures for the provision of special education services, the team determined that the previously identified areas of non-compliance throughout the Timberlane School District have been successfully resolved. A great deal of work has taken place in SAU 55 in recent years to update all forms and related procedures so that compliance with IDEA '97 is successfully met. Staff are well informed of current requirements and demonstrate a high level of performance in carrying out special education policies and procedures. The visiting team agreed that all previously identified areas of non-compliance have been addressed. The only issues identified through this visit relate to a few minor procedures related to IDEA '97.

### **III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:**

The staff of Timberlane School District work hard to ensure that all students are receiving the educational supports they need. The visiting team was very impressed with the excellent skill and knowledge demonstrated by staff as well as the common expression of pride in the district. There were no issues of significance identified during this program approval visit. The few minor issues of non-compliance noted are easily corrected.

#### **IV. COMMENDATIONS, and CITATIONS and SUGGESTIONS: DISTRICT-WIDE**

Name of Program(s) Visited: All

##### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- Timberlane School District is commended for the leadership throughout the district resulting in the excellent programming and sense of common goal that is clearly identified in the Strategic Plan. The superintendent, school board, building and district administrators, faculty, staff, parents and community members are congratulated for this comprehensive, inclusive and visionary strategic plan that articulates beliefs, vision statements and goals, as well as providing a timeline and the resources necessary for achievement and success.
- Timberlane School District demonstrates excellence in all aspects of student educational programming. While this visiting team focused on the provision of services to students with educational disabilities, they found outstanding results in the programming models and effective practice used by all staff and offered to all students.
- Colleen Bovi, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, is commended for the development of the “Special Education Manual”. The clearly designed manual is an excellent resource/tool for district faculty and administrators. This important handbook provides all staff with a common language and explanation of all special education, procedures and requirements necessary to implement effective programming.
- SAU Special Education administration, under the leadership of Colleen Bovi, are commended for the consistent support, information, connection and encouragement they offer to the building level staff.
- The Timberlane School District staff are commended for their above average efforts to provide excellent educational programming to all students within the SAU. Staff reports a sense of pride in the district and it shows.
- The Timberlane School District is commended for the effective Student Study Team (SST) that provides staff and students with an early system of support in place of an immediate referral to special education.
- The Timberlane School District special education department is commended for the development of the Paraprofessional Handbook that serves as a resource and support for teaching assistants.
- The Timberlane School District is commended for the efforts in providing a comprehensive technology plan that provides computers and software to all classrooms, in addition to each school building.
- The evidence of ongoing and relevant professional development opportunities for all staff is clear and is commended.
- The specific and innovative work done in the Timberlane School District to provide excellent services to students diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD/ADHD) or Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) is seen as highly successful and is commended.
- The Preschool program is highly effective and provides a strong beginning for students with disabilities.
- The strong presence of programs in the arts is important for all students and is commended. Particularly impressive is the planned new Fine Arts Center.
- The SAU is commended for the ambitious and comprehensive building project that will provide all students with safe, effective and attractive learning environments.

##### **CITATIONS:** (in numerical order)

Please see building level citations.

##### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Consider ways to consult and collaborate with other New Hampshire school districts to share the effective practices in place in SAU 55.

<b>ATKINSON ACADEMY</b>
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**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:**     Grades 3 and 5 programs

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:**     2 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- The staff at Atkinson Academy are highly motivated and very caring and dedicated to the students.
- There is very good support and collaboration evident among all staff.
- All students are accessing the regular curriculum; integration is well established.
- There is good support from the central office. Staff is pleased with the inservice training provided.
- Specialists are available within the district and their work is well integrated into regular classes through whole class activities. A very good model.
- Paperwork is easily accessible and well organized.
- There is time to meet and plan among the staff.
- The reading program is effective.
- Morale among staff is very high.

**CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1109.01

CFR300.347(b)(2)

**IEP Development**

Annual goals are not written in measurable terms with benchmarks or objectives that enables the child's involvement in general curriculum.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)

CFR300.563

**Confidentiality**

A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Staff express need for more space and additional computers.
- Some staff would like training offered that is specific to their needs.

## DANVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Modified Regular Programs 2) Learning Center

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 FILES

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- The staff collaboration and communication is very evident and effective. The team teaching and integration of related services into classroom curriculum is commended. Efforts are made for regular and special education staff to meet and plan throughout the week.
- Regular educators express an interest in including all students in the classroom as much as possible. The sense of teamwork and a genuine philosophy of inclusionary practice is very evident.
- The work being done to write IEP's using rubrics to measure student growth and connect the IEP to the general curriculum is commended.
- Regular educators work closely with and supervise teaching assistants in the classroom so that individual student needs are successfully met. Time is available on a weekly basis for planning together.
- There is weekly planning time created for special educators and weekly lunch meetings are held between case managers and grade level teachers.
- The building administration is very supportive of all staff and programming.
- There is good support from the central office administration for staff and programming.
- The PDD consultant model for the preschool and elementary programs is very good.
- The use of rubrics in writing IEP's is effective in making objectives highly meaningful and measurable.
- The reduced caseload and class sizes are commended. A new fourth grade teacher is in the process of being hired.
- The school facility is beautifully renovated and there is a good amount of space for instruction and activities.
- The evidence and use of computers in every classroom is commended.
- Staff report that they have the materials they need for instruction.
- All comments generated during the visit were very positive and supportive of the school.

### **CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1109.01

CFR300.347(b)(2)

#### **IEP Development**

Annual goals are not written in measurable terms with benchmarks or objectives that enables the child's involvement in general curriculum.

There is no evidence that NHEIAP results were considered in developing IEP's.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)

CFR300.563

#### **Confidentiality**

A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

None at this time.

<b>POLLARD SCHOOL</b>
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**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:**                      1) Grade 3 (multi-age)                      2) EH Program

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:**    4 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- There is a great staff at the Pollard School. They are very dedicated to their work and to their students.
- There is an excellent effort to include all students in regular classes to the greatest extent possible.
- The newly created PDD program is commended.
- There is a sense of mutual respect and collaboration and unity throughout the school. Everyone gives everyone else credit for the success of the school programs.
- Staff express satisfaction at the professional development opportunities available, particularly the related service staff that have specific areas of training needs.
- There is very strong support from administration at the school and district level.
- The Pollard School is a real community school with a great deal of spirit that is evident in all the work and effort on the part of all involved.

**CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1109.01

CFR300.347(b)(2)

**IEP Development**

Annual goals are not written in measurable terms with benchmarks or objectives that enable the child's involvement in general curriculum.

No explanation of how disability affects involvement and progress in general curriculum.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)

CFR300.563

**Confidentiality**

A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Consider additional guidance services for Emotionally Handicapped population. A new position might combine the guidance support and special education coordination responsibilities presently assumed by the Assistant Principal.
- Consider organizing the student files in a more accessible format.



## SANDOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Learning Center 2) Resource 3) Modified Regular Program

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 FILES

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- The atmosphere in the school is welcoming, relaxed, child centered, and due to a lack of space, very cozy.
- There is very good staff collaboration. Staff value and respect opinions of team members.
- Attempts to include students are successful and all team members share responsibility for success.
- There are close ties established with parents. There is ongoing communication and involvement.
- There is multidisciplinary support to teachers, students and families. (Home –School Coordinator, PDD Consultant).
- Student files are well organized and paperwork is completed thoroughly.
- The school nurse is involved in initial referral for vision and hearing screening and does a file review for medical conditions that could interfere with learning. She is proud of her computer program which lists medical needs etc. and gives her ease of access to medical information.
- The staff appreciates administrative support for programs from both the building and SAU levels.
- The Learning Center teacher provides comprehensive training to paraprofessionals to help students manage behavior.
- The building principal is in attendance at all SST (Student Support Team) meetings.

### **CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1109.01

CFR300.347(b)(2)

#### **IEP Development**

Annual goals are not written in measurable terms with benchmarks or objectives that enable the child's involvement in general curriculum.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)

CFR300.563

#### **Confidentiality**

A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

CFR300.504

Procedural safeguards are not given with notification of IEP meeting.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Space issues are a problem, but are expected to be alleviated when the new school opens.
- Continue to provide relevant and ongoing professional development inservice opportunities to all staff.

## TIMBERLANE MIDDLE SCHOOL

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) E H Program 2) LD Program 3) Modified Regular Program

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 3 FILES

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- The staff places an emphasis on the whole child and the whole picture.
- The staff creates leveled modifications that are often so subtle, other students are unaware they exist.
- There is a definite “team” feeling. Everyone works together.
- Staff are very supportive of one another and feel supported by everyone.
- There is a lot of structure, positive reinforcement, and consistency within the school.
- The staff spends lots of time meeting or talking about ways to help students.
- The support staff’s involvement is encouraged in all aspects of the school, not just IEP related services.
- Students with disabilities are fully included. All students have access to all of the school’s resources.
- Staff work hard to develop positive rapport with students and to create a safe, comfortable environment for learning.
- The “Peer Advocacy Program” in 8A is commended for its innovation in providing peer support to students in an effort to help them assess and plan for work assignments. This is used with all students.
- Special education teachers feel welcomed by all the academic teams.
- There is no attitude of “your” kids; it’s “our kids”.
- There is a good system for meeting time with all staff, including support staff, unified arts, physical education staff, etc.
- Staff goes beyond what is expected and provide students with more services and support than is indicated on the IEP’s.
- Enthusiastic staff. (Mr. Lombardo’s social studies class was wonderful).
- The building principal is supportive of his staff and advocates for them.
- The Bridges Program provides support to non-coded, at-risk students.
- Parental support is encouraged and supported.
- The program for multi-handicapped students is very good.

### **CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1109.01

CFR300.347(a)(1)i

#### **IEP Development**

IEP’s did not include how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum. There was no evidence that NHEIAP or district-wide testing results were considered.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)

CFR300.563

#### **Confidentiality**

A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

There was no public listing of names and positions of those employees who have access to personally identifiable information.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Consider ways to share the successes of the programming and philosophy with other schools/districts.
- Continue with efforts to improve the physical condition of the middle school building.

- Continue efforts to maintain communications with parents. One parent of an eighth grade student interviewed expressed a wish for increased communication.
- Consider ways to integrate students with specific disabilities into all of the teams rather than “homogeneously” clustering them on a certain team.

<b>TIMBERLANE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL</b>
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**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:**    1) Learning Center      2) Lifeskills Program

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:**    3 FILES

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- Great staff morale. All staff interviewed stated feeling supported and motivated to be there.
- Good staff to student ratio for the delivery of services to students with disabilities. District is commended for this significant effort to provide the appropriate staffing patterns.
- Special education team is very organized and works very well together.
- The work on developing IEP rubrics at the high school level is excellent and will help connect the student goals and objectives clearly to curriculum and NH Curriculum Frameworks.
- Staff is very flexible and is willing to help and support each other.
- The high school special education coordinator is very involved with and supportive of staff.
- Student needs come first.
- The building principal is very supportive.
- The special education staff and programs are fully a part of the fabric of the school.

**CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1109.01  
CFR300.347(b)(2)

**IEP Development**

Annual goals are not written in measurable terms with benchmarks or objectives that enables the child's involvement in general curriculum.  
No explanation of how disability affects involvement and progress in general curriculum.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)  
CFR300.563

**Confidentiality**

A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

Ed. 1125.03  
CFR300.503(b)1-7

**Written Prior Notice**

Written Prior Notice forms are written in broad terms and should be redesigned to provide more specific information.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Review all files to make sure that a Record of Disclosure is in each one.
- Review the length of time it is taking to complete student evaluations. In two records, reviewed evaluations took longer than 45 days.

## TIMBERLANE LEARNING CENTER

**PROGRAM(S) VISITED:** 1) Timberlane Learning Center 2) PDD Program

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 4 FILES

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- The staff is dedicated, hard working, enthusiastic and proud of their work and the district.
- There is a clearly individualized approach to meeting each child's needs.
- Weekly meetings with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services are very effective.
- The staff is respectful of parents and work hard to accommodate parent needs.
- The interdisciplinary team works very well together. There is a high level of trust and respect.
- Great kids! Great parents! Great Staff!

### **CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1109.01  
CFR300.347(b)(2) **IEP Development**  
Annual goals are not written in measurable terms with benchmarks or objectives that enables the child's involvement in general curriculum.

Ed. 1109.11  
CFR300.347 (a)(7)ii **Progress**  
Progress documentation does not show the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)  
CFR300.563 **Confidentiality**  
A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Consider ways to increase the number of typically developing peers into the preschool program.
- Paraprofessionals should have access to the IEP's, but student evaluations and other documentation should be relayed/interpreted to them by certified staff as relevant.
- Continue working to the goal of a new and larger physical space for the preschool program.

OUT OF DISTRICT PLACEMENTS
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**# OF FILES REVIEWED:** 1 FILE

**COMMENDATIONS:**

- The student records reviewed are found to be well organized and in excellent order.

**CITATIONS:**

None at this time

**SUGGESTIONS;**

None at this time.

**ADDENDUM**

**JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM**

**SAU 55  
TIMBERLANE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Student File Review**

**Case Study Document**

**Reimbursement Claim Form**

**Case Study Addendum Form**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADDENDUM</b> <b>JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</b></p>
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**SAU 55**

**# OF FILES REVIEWED:**    2 FILES

**CITATIONS:**

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10)  
CFR300.563

**Confidentiality**

A record of disclosure form was not in the student file.

Ed. 1109.01(j)

**IEPs**

IEP did not contain a list of the individuals or service providers responsible for implementation.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

None at this time. Student records are in excellent condition with services well provided to students.